

REMARKS

The Office Action was carefully studied. The independent Claims 1 and 5 have been amended; Claims 2 and 6 have been further limited; Claims 3, 4, 7 to 10, 14 and 15 have been amended in respect of their dependencies; and Claims 17 to 19 have been cancelled.

Thus, the following Claims are now pending:

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 10 to 12, 14 to 16.

Claims Objections

Claim 1: “fast” “According to the shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 5th Edition, Volume 1, page 928, the primary meaning of “fast” is “with firm grasp or attachment, securely”. While the Applicant contends that the word “fast” was correctly used, “fast with” has now been amended to read “firmly attached to”; and

The “dialing” typing error has now been corrected to read “dilating”.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC Paragraph 112

The Claims rejected have now been cancelled and the Examiner’s rejections have thus been rendered moot.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC Paragraph 102

Matsumoto et al. discloses (as far as the Applicant is able to determine) a seal for sealing a stationary bearing casing against a shaft. The bearing casing includes a radially inward, axially extending sleeve formation 3 providing a stationary sealing face. The shaft 10 mounts a disc 2 having a radially outer sleeve formation 4, within which a seal 5, 6, 8 is accommodated. Undesirable matter which may enter an enclosed annular

volume 9 radially inward of the sleeve formation 4 is prevented by the seal from entering a sealed off volume proximate the shaft 10 and which (presumably) leads to the bearing area.

Claims 1 and 5 of the current invention provide a method of and a rotary shield assembly for shielding a bearing mounted in a bearing casing which includes a bearing seal against undesirable matter. The current invention thus provides a pre-defence in that it shields also the bearing casing and bearing seal against undesirable matter thus ameliorating the duty of the bearing seal. The method is carried out by laterally overlapping or hooding or cowl the side cover which mounts the bearing seal, and by a peripheral rim at least partially overlapping the bearing casing to shield the bearing casing from stray undesirable matter and to fling any such stray undesirable matter touching the shield centrifugally away from the bearing casing.

Matsumoto et al. does not disclose structure overlapping or hooding or cowl a side cover – the seal structure overlaps merely the radially inward sleeve formation 3 and is axially spaced from the bearing casing to leave a peripherally exposed radially extending passage. The structure of Matsumoto et al. defines a partially enclosed annular volume into which stray, undesirable matter can find a way via said peripherally exposed radially extending passage, but from which such stray undesirable matter cannot centrifugally be flung away because of its enclosed nature – in fact, the enclosed volume 9 accumulates the stray undesirable matter, thus aggravating the duty on the seal 5, 6, 8.

It is contended with respect that the object of the current invention, namely to shield the bearing casing and side cover mounting the bearing seal by flinging stray undesirable matter centrifugally away from the bearing casing, is not disclosed in Matsumoto et al (or in any other of the prior art references, whether considered

individually or in combination), nor is Matsumoto et al. able to operate in such a fashion or achieve such an object. It is thus contended that Claims 1 and 5 are now clearly distinguishable over the prior art and that Claims 1 and 5 should now be allowed.

It is further contended that Claims 2 and 6, being dependent from respectively Claims 1 and 5, should likewise be allowable if Claims 1 and 5 are allowed.

The Examiner indicated allowable subject matter in Claims 10 and 11 and it is contended that they should now be allowed, if Claim 5 is allowed.

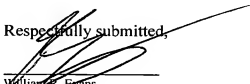
Claims 12 and 14 respectively recite desirable features and allowance is solicited on the basis that Claims 12 and 14 are dependent (directly and indirectly respectively) from Claim 5.

Claim 15: It is respectfully pointed out that Iketani discloses a primary roller bearing seal which is totally enclosed and in which the seal element is permanently in contact with a sealing surface. It is clear that Iketani operates very differently to and is structured very differently to the current invention and even to Matsumoto et al. It is contended that it is not at all obvious to combine Iketani in any way with Matsumoto et al and even if so combined, would still not render Matsumoto et al. any closer to the current invention. Allowance of Claim 15 is thus solicited.

The Examiner previously indicated desirable subject matter in Claim 16 and it is now solicited that Claim 16 should be allowed.

Reconsideration and allowance are, therefore, requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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